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 CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON REFUGEES

# REFUGE

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## SOUTHEAST ASIA TODAY: VISIT TO VIETNAM, KAMPUCHEA AND THAILAND

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By Nancy Pocock, Canadian Friends Service Committee

In April I returned from a trip to Southeast Asia on behalf of the Canadian Friends' Service Committee. In cooperation with other Quaker groups we send aid to projects in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Thailand. Also, being active with the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees, I was looking into the current refugee situation.

### Aid for Vietnam

Unless the West, led by the United Nations, has a change of heart and sends badly needed food, medicine and other aid to Vietnam, many more people will leave and we will again be faced with desperate people needing refuge. It would be better for them and cost us far less in the long run if we would help Vietnam and Kampuchea care for their own people at home.

Vietnam is desperately short of food. Typhoons and floods have wiped out most of the rice crops of the last two years. Combined with the destruction of the land by herbicides and bombs dropped by the United States during the war, this has created drastic food shortages and put Vietnam on the brink of disaster.

The United States has launched a world-wide campaign to cut off development assistance from international agencies to Vietnam. For several years the European Economic Community (EEC) has supplied milk powder, butter, oil, and a high-protein food supplement to the United Nations Children's Fund, which gave it as an emergency donation to the children of Vietnam. This year, because of pressure from the United States on the EEC, it was not sent.

We visited the Children's Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and saw the direct results of this deprivation on the children. Because the orphanages and hospitals were not able to give the children and babies milk, the children suffer from severe malnutrition, high susceptibility to

disease, mental retardation, loss of sight and hearing, and finally death. The excuse of the United States is Vietnam's intrusion into Kampuchea.

But among Kampuchians I talked to, both in Phnom Penh and in the refugee camps, there was a consensus of opinion that while some were not too happy with the presence of the Vietnamese army in their country, they preferred them to Pol Pot. Every Khmer I met had a tragic story to tell of the loss of mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, husbands, and children; many had actually seen them killed by Pol Pot's soldiers. When we visited the schools, the drawings of the children were filled with black figures killing people amid masses of blood. This would surely convince anyone who doubted the truth of the stories.

### Discontent in Ho Chi Minh City

In Ho Chi Minh City I experienced the great differences between northern and southern Vietnam. The people there are restless, unhappy and uncooperative. They blame the new government for all their economic ills, shortages of food, medicine, etc. Unable to understand the affluence of the city under the Americans and unable to relate to the socialist ideas of the government, all they want to do is leave and go to America. The government, forced by its promise to the United Nations and neighbouring countries to keep the people from leaving and also by the necessity of strict rationing to feed all the people, is obliged to be repressive.

The government people I talked to admitted making mistakes, such as trying to socialize the economy too quickly. They tried three years ago to nationalize businesses and stamp out the black market, but it didn't work. Now they have returned many businesses to their original owners and the free market flourishes in both the North and the South. After so many years of fighting in the

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**REFUGE** is dedicated to encouraging Canadian citizen participation in helping refugees, by providing a forum for sharing information and opinion on domestic and international issues pertaining to refugees.

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Kampuchean returning home with UNHCR resettlement kit. Photo: UNHCR

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### SIKHS STRAIN REFUGEE POLICY

In recent months there has been a dramatic increase in the number of East Indian Sikhs coming to Canada, many of whom claim to be refugees. Toronto International Airport at Malton, where most of the Sikhs first land, has had arrivals in excess of fifty per day.

Most frequently, the Sikhs claim that they are persecuted for their membership in the Janata party, the political party which ousted Indira Gandhi's government in 1977. But events at ports of entry have led Canadian immigration officials to believe that the claims may be false and that the Sikhs have received specific instruction on what to do and say once in Canada. In many cases, Sikhs who speak little or no English are arriving at the airport saying "refugee, refugee" to the first officials they encounter. In addition, waiting relatives frequently have \$2,000 to \$5,000 ready in cash to post the bond required to ensure that a refugee claimant does not disappear while his case is under review.

A good portion of this "coaching", it seems, has come from travel agents, primarily in Jullundur City, who give the Sikhs Canadian contacts and the information that Canada does not turn away refugees. For this service, the agents charge fees in excess of the \$1,200 one-way air fare to Canada.

This situation has put considerable pressure on Canada's immigration policy, which forbids visitors' applying for permanent residence but also forbids the turning away of anyone claiming to be a refugee. The process of determining the validity of a claim for refugee status is a lengthy one which may extend over a year and a half, given the size of the ever-growing caseload. Nevertheless, officials have no recourse but to consider all the claims.

During the intervening period, the claimant is permitted to live in Canada. This opportunity to live in Canada, even temporarily, seems in fact to be the prime factor behind making the request for refugee status. However some Sikhs who have not had bond posted for them or who immigration officials fear might disappear, must remain in hotels at the airport.

The situation has caused some controversy within the East Indian community in Canada. Mr. Ritendra Ray of the Tagore Lectureship Foundation expressed anger in an interview with the *Toronto Star* (June 4, 1981), saying that the claims are no more than a ruse and that "to say one is fleeing persecution from India is false" because "India inherited British common laws. It's a democracy." But others are not so much upset by what Ray called a "stunt to get into Canada" as by the fact that many of the Sikhs, who are largely uneducated tenant farmers, have been swindled out of everything they own by unscrupulous travel agents.

"So far the stories told by the Sikhs claiming refugee status don't qualify them and all have been refused," said Ken Brown, chairman of the Refugee Status Advisory Committee. As of June 25, 1981, there have been no deportations, but André Pilon, District Administrator for Immigration Canada at Malton, said that there had been a number of one-year exclusions.

- S.F.

jungle, they were ill-prepared to govern a large, corrupt city like Saigon, and with so many difficulties it has been almost impossible to win the hearts of the people. Also, the very real threat of another attack by China is always there. They felt it necessary to conscript the able young men into the army, losing the manpower they so desperately needed to grow food and reconstruct the country. After their high expectations for peace after the Americans left, both the young people and their families fear another war and resent the necessity of joining the army.

In spite of all the difficulties there are many devoted, dedicated people who are serving their fellow citizens and their country to the limit of their ability. I am convinced that if only enough aid were forthcoming, given the Vietnamese people's great courage and great capacity for reconciliation and creativity they would be able to build the good humane society that Ho Chi Minh and many of my friends have told me they dreamed of all through the long and bitter wars.

### Kampuchea slowly recovering

Phnom Penh is a strange city - much of it still empty or destroyed but other parts teeming with people. None of the utilities work well: the electricity comes and goes; the water has little pressure; the sewage system is wrecked and everyone fears a major epidemic.

The people are still fed by international agencies, but they are getting back to growing food. Kampuchea is a

... continued on page 8.

### Refugee Movements in Southeast Asia

	Arrivals in Countries of First Asylum		Departures for Permanent Settlement Elsewhere
	Land	Boat	
Jan.	4,101	5,579	10,140
Feb.	4,823	4,060	13,046
Mar.	17,989	5,154	16,830
Apr.	2,093	11,212	10,045
May	1,532	14,792	18,734
June	1,384	12,368	15,118

Refugees awaiting durable solutions (as of July 1981):

Boat: 63,310

Land: 105,906

**Total: 169,216 \***

\* This number does not include Kampuchean in Thai holding centres who are not designated refugees or refugees in Refugee Processing Centres who are scheduled to proceed to the United States after language and orientation programmes.

Source: UNHCR

## ONE IN TEN AFGHANS IS A REFUGEE

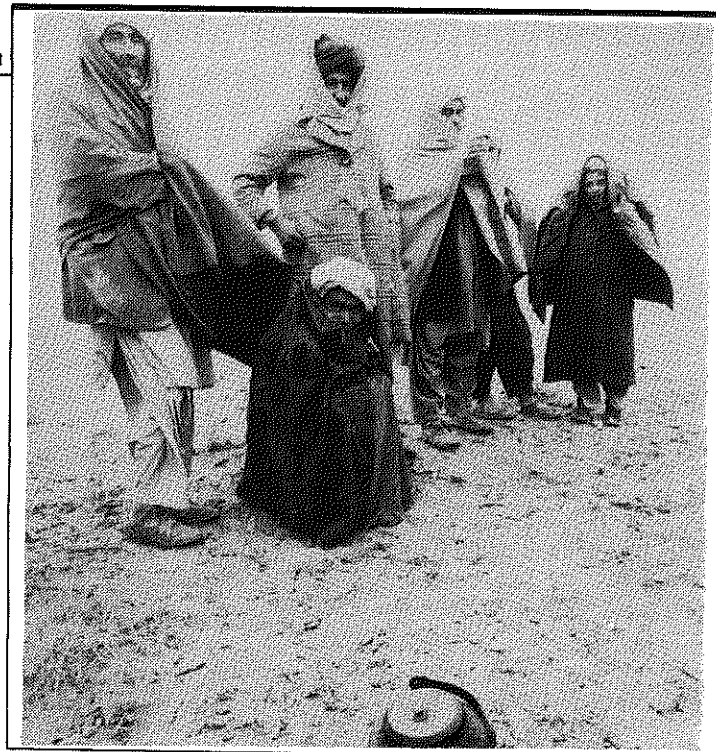
Mr. Dave Jenkins of Vancouver recently returned from fifteen months as chief delegate for the League of Red Cross Societies in Pakistan, where he helped the Pakistan Red Crescent Society run a relief programme for 100,000 Afghan refugees.

Mr. Jenkins estimates that there are close to two million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, 1.6 million being registered with the UNHCR. Of these, 30-40,000 are nomads who traditionally spend the winter in Pakistan, but in 1978 did not return to Afghanistan following the April coup that installed the communist People's Democratic Party government. The majority of the refugees are labourers and farmers, once homeowners, now living in tents along the border. Some urban and professional refugees are living in Pakistan's cities on their savings.

The most pressing material problem for these refugees, Jenkins said, is the extreme cold. For example, because the refugees are scattered wide apart in tribal clusters of tent villages - often so wide apart that they have to walk for days to receive their monthly rations - sanitation has not yet posed a health hazard, and disease is not more prevalent among the refugees than within Afghanistan or Pakistan. However, the cold means that the condition of anyone who does get sick can deteriorate rapidly: a child with the measles who would recover at home in bed may die on the cold ground in a tent. Jenkins turned most of his efforts to obtaining tents, blankets and warm cloth and clothing.

The refugees brought three million goats, sheep, and other livestock with them, so they aren't starving, "although that does not mean the people aren't hungry." International agencies provide wheat, oil, tea, and sugar, and the government of Pakistan provides the refugees with cash to purchase meat and vegetables locally.

The women face particular problems, Jenkins noted. In Afghan culture, it is unacceptable for a male doctor to examine a woman. The international agencies' medical teams therefore include "lady health visitors." Another problem facing women is that rations are distributed through heads of households or through tribal leaders. Women, especially



widows, sometimes do not get their fair share and special programmes have had to be developed to help feed women and children. Also, the girls receive no education.

Whatever time these refugees don't spend for survival they devote to religious education. A common sight, Jenkins said, was young boys huddled behind a stone wall to ward off the wind, learning the Koran by rote under the tutelage of the religious leaders.

When will these people be able to return home? Pakistan has discouraged the erection of mud buildings, because the land the refugees occupy is not government-owned. Jenkins speculated on an additional reason: such building would imply the long-term nature of the problem and, in turn, acceptance of it. But no one has gone home yet, and a few educated, urban refugees have turned to resettlement in third countries as the only possible solution to their problems. The rest continue to wait.

- K.H.

## THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR REFUGEES

Throughout the past spring many Canadians participated in local consultations held under the auspices of the Canadian Foundation for Refugees regarding the need for a national grass-roots organization on behalf of refugees. The Board of Directors of the Foundation has already decided to act on several of the 68 specific recommendations in the draft report:

### Distribution of the report:

One copy of the full draft report will be deposited in a convenient place in each community where a workshop was held. Each participant will receive a copy of the summary of the workshop in his community and information on the location of the full report. Comments are welcome. (Although the report itself had recommended that copies of the recommendations should also be distributed to all workshop participants, the Directors felt this would be unnecessarily costly.)

### Loans to help organize local networks:

In order to facilitate the development of local, regional

and provincial organizations, seed money will be made available in the form of loans, repayable if and when the organization obtains federal and provincial grants, to enable existing community organizations to organize local chapters of volunteers in association with settlement workers, language teachers, ethnic organizations concerned for refugees, etc. Details are being worked out.

### Documentation Centre:

The Foundation is in the process of creating a Documentation Centre for the distribution of refugee-related materials in both English and French. The kind of documentation centre recommended in the draft report "should not originate needed documents but should solicit invitations to produce such documents by local organizations and assist to arrange the funding for their production" (p. 38).

- K.H.

Suggestions for additional members of the Board are encouraged.

Foster Friends, Be A Friend, Friendship Families, Canadian Friends, Mes Amis de Partout . . . In almost every Canadian community that took in both private and government-sponsored Southeast Asian refugees, volunteers have come forth to offer government-sponsored refugees the personal support privately-sponsored refugees receive.

In general, the federal government provides refugees with hotel accommodation when they first arrive, with basic orientation classes on such topics as shopping and banking, and with financial support until the refugees' incomes can meet their basic needs. For many this is insufficient for them to find their way in their new home.

But for every newcomer - from the one who, unable to speak a word of English or French, wanders into a refugee aid agency clutching a scrap of paper, "Somebody please help this man find a place to live", to the one who is independent within a month yet two years later may still have no Canadian friends - some personal contact with members of the older community seems essential to full integration into our society.

In some areas, the Manpower Officers have taken this role on themselves, going into the refugees' homes to show them how to cook cheap meals when they can't make ends meet on their allowance, running English conversation groups, inviting people to dinner in their



C. WESTCOTT

homes. In other cases, sponsors have endeavoured to help the friends of the people they sponsored.

But in many communities, organized volunteer programmes evolved to meet this deficiency. Some of these communities share their experiences here, in the hope that others will share theirs.

## THE FIRST FRIENDSHIP FAMILIES

by Vera Arkell, Windsor

Windsor - the city with the big heart. It is known to give more to charities per capita than any other city in Canada. With equal generosity, Windsor opened its heart to the Southeast Asian refugees.

On March 15, 1978, the "Mayor's Committee for Vietnamese Refugees," an informal group comprising the mayor and a few concerned citizens, met out of growing concern for Indochinese refugees. The group decided to assist twenty families from Indochina to resettle in Windsor. Because of the vast cultural differences between their countries and Canada, and the ordeals they had experienced, we believed that a close, personal association with a Windsor family, person or group of persons would help alleviate the overwhelming task of resettlement.

So the Mayor's Committee established contacts with local church congregations and informed them of the need and ways in which they might help the refugees. The role of the Friendship Family was to befriend the new arrivals in whatever way possible, in order to build a relationship of mutual trust which would support the refugees in their search for identity and acceptance in a new culture. The response of Windsorites was immediate and enthusiastic. In June 1978 a telex from Singapore expressed thanks and stated that Windsor was the leading city in sponsoring refugees.

As we enter mid-1981, we see that this programme did much to cultivate a sense of acceptance and security for the refugees, and to enrich the lives of the people involved. Many Friendship Family groups or individuals have maintained strong ties with the refugees since their arrival almost three years ago. And we believe that the first experiences in Friendship Family responsibilities greatly fostered the efforts at private sponsorship.

## FRIENDS, FRIE

## SUDBURY FAMILIES WELCOME REFUGEES INTO THEIR HOMES

by Carole Paré and Tien Hoang, Sudbury Regional Multicultural Centre

Some Canadians may think of Sudbury as an isolated mining community. We like to think of ourselves as the heart of Northern Ontario, a prosperous, modern and very friendly city of 160,000 people. In the past two years, Sudburians have warmly welcomed more than 400 Indochinese refugees, approximately 85 government-sponsored and 315 privately-sponsored.

The Sudbury Regional Multicultural Centre works closely with Employment and Immigration Canada in coordinating refugee settlement and adaptation. Through our "Home Placement Programme" for government-sponsored refugees, new arrivals are placed directly with Canadian families until an apartment can be found.

Previously, these people were put into a local hotel and sometimes spent two to three weeks isolated and often very lonely. The Home Placement Programme helps to overcome some of these initial fears and frustrations, because there is someone to help in those first few weeks. And for the refugees, it is also a chance to learn first-hand the Canadian language, culture and way of life. When they arrive they are given a choice of whether to go to a hotel or a house, and no one has yet chosen the hotel.

Each host family is given \$45 a week per person for room and board, which represents an enormous savings to the government.

This system has been a tremendous success! All of our participating Canadian families have been so pleased with the experience that they have formed lasting



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relationships with their new friends and many have requested second and third families.

## FRIENDSHIP FAMILIES IN TORONTO

by *Roni Chaleff*, Operation Lifeline

Finding housing, employment and language classes, let alone friends, is not easy for newcomers no matter where they are. When mass transit enters the picture; when one needs to be able to read the newspaper to locate jobs and housing, call quickly, and get there before someone else gets there first; when there is no community centre and sometimes not even an easily-defined community; the situation grows impossible. In a sprawling urban environment, it is crucial to know there is someone you can turn to when you need help and the Manpower office is closed. It is crucial to know there is someone who cares.

Any person, family or group who is interested in becoming a Friendship Family to provide this orientation assistance and social contact to a government-sponsored refugee on an ongoing basis, first attends one of our monthly orientation meetings. Then he submits, an information sheet about himself, and the process begins of matching him with one refugee or refugee family newly arrived in the city, either from overseas or often from elsewhere in the country.

In such a large city we find it necessary to screen volunteers before actually introducing them to the refugees. A volunteer social worker does this by phone.

The Friendship Family and the refugees are first introduced by an interpreter. Later, since the Friendship Families come from all walks of life and from all parts of the city and would never have a chance to meet, organized meetings offer them an important opportunity to share their stories, their experiences in coping with difficulties, their discoveries of fun and cheap activities. Meetings for the newcomers in their own languages help clear up any concerns they have about their Friendship Families or any questions about employment, language classes, getting their families out of the refugee camps, etc. Finally, parties and cultural events contribute to a sense of community spirit on both sides, which is usually so difficult to create in a large city.

The Friendship Families themselves do much of the administration of the programme, including general office work, organizing social activities, speaking to their church groups to recruit more volunteers, and giving interviews to the media to publicize the programme. But one full-time coordinator is also necessary, as well as contract workers who speak Vietnamese, Chinese, Lao and Khmer.

## WINNIPEG'S ESCORT SERVICE

by *Marjery Soloman*, Manitoba Joint Refugee Coordinating Committee

The "Be A Friend" programme of the Manitoba Joint Refugee Coordinating Committee was initiated in response to concerns expressed by the community for the government-sponsored Southeast Asian refugees arriving in Winnipeg.

We asked volunteers to work for one half day a week escorting people to medical appointments, helping to enroll children in school, explaining public transit or helping a family with their shopping. Soon many of the volunteers were recruiting their spouses, teen-age children and friends to help, and increasing their own volunteer time.

A former home economics teacher spends three afternoons a week explaining the complexities of shopping in a North American supermarket and showing families where they can find the oriental groceries necessary for their cooking. A retired businessman spends many hours preparing resumes and helping to find employment. New mothers are visited in hospital by a volunteer who not only makes sure that they will be able to manage on their own when they go home but supplies them with whatever baby clothes and equipment they may need from a seemingly endless supply she gathers from friends and acquaintances. Expectant mothers want to be assured that "Mrs. Mary" will come to see them after their babies are born.

Volunteers help people through the maze of government and agency offices - they act as advocates - they help to locate more suitable housing - they drive people to the hospital regardless of the hour - they take families on friendly outings - they seldom say "no."

We are pleased that our seventy plus Canadian volunteers are now being joined by many volunteers from the refugee community. These people are now ready to "be a friend" and help someone else start a new life in Canada.

## ANDS, FRIENDS . . .

Employment and Immigration Canada      Employment and Immigration Canada

and Mrs. Mai:

forgive me for writing in English. I wish that I could write in your own language, but Quyen assured me that you would be able to read English.

allow me to introduce myself. Quyen came to Canada under the sponsorship of the Canadian government, and I am the government representative responsible for the wellbeing of the Vietnamese immigrants in the St. Louis area, which is where Quyen was sent. It is my responsibility that they are enrolled in English-language classes as soon as possible, that they have a suitable place to live, enough clothes and money, and to help them find employment when they have learned English. I have done for Quyen: he is now settled in a very pleasant apartment with two other young men from Saigon, and they are all studying hard, and doing very well in their English classes.

ed to write this letter to you for several reasons: first, because I am a mother myself--my husband and I have five children, some of whom are around the same age as Quyen, and therefore I know how difficult it can be for you to have your oldest son so far away in a strange country, and how concerned you must be for his welfare.

More than that, my husband and I have become very fond of Quyen and his friends. They have been to our house many times for dinner, and we have come to feel almost as if they were our own sons. They are very fine young men, very courageous, and we are sorry that their lives have been interrupted by tragedy. However, Canada is a good country, with many opportunities for young people, and we are willing to work hard, and we will ensure that they get the help they need to build their lives again.

is obviously a very intelligent young man--he is one of the best students in his English class--and when he is at our house we enjoy his company very much. He is well and happy--except for the fact that he misses his family. He has shown us pictures of his brother and sister, and often speaks of you. I am sure that you miss him very much, and I am sure that you miss him very much. However, please do not worry about his welfare--we will ensure that he is taken care of.

would like to write to me, I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

ely,

*Mary Butler*

## CONFERENCE NOTES

### NGO/UNHCR Consultation

Nine Canadian delegates attended an NGO/UNHCR consultation in Geneva, from 20 to 22 May 1981. The consultation stressed the need to achieve a balance between coordination of refugee relief activities on the one hand and the advantages of the diversity and independence of NGOs on the other. For instance, NGOs have the flexibility to assist people in refugee-like situations who do not qualify for formal refugee status; to act quickly and pragmatically, since they often already have connections within the relevant country, and to deal with refugees in an informal, person-to-person manner. At the same time, UNHCR can often act where difficulties arise between governments and foreign or local NGOs, and can facilitate cooperation and coordination in planning and implementation.

The UNHCR's principal interest in the consultation, evidenced by the lack of representation of NGOs from first-asylum countries, seems to have been extending its cooperation with NGOs to include Public Relations/Fundraising campaigns in donor countries. This proposition received a mixed reaction from the NGOs.

Many of the NGOs, who had paid their own way to the conference, felt that little was produced relative to the amount spent.

- K.H.

### The Standing Conference of Canadian Organizations Concerned for Refugees - 1981 Refugee Consultation

The Standing Conference of Canadian Organizations Concerned for Refugees met in Hamilton, Ontario on June 5, 6 and 7, 1981. Information was presented on topics including:

- resettlement concerns across the country, including vocational training and retraining and secondary migration
- the Canadian Foundation for Refugees
- the UN International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa
- the history and protection role of the UNHCR in Canada
- the federal refugee programme for 1982
- a visit to El Salvador.

Recommendations were adopted on topics including:

- larger refugee quotas for Africa and Central America
- improved federal government funding of voluntary resettlement services in Canada
- improvements in the refugee status process in Canada such as better quality interpreters, greater speed, ensuring that a claimant have access to any material contributing to a negative decision on his case
- facilitation of family reunification through flexible sponsorship arrangements such as having Canadians act as guarantors
- access of all organizations who participated in consultations regarding the future of the Canadian Foundation for Refugees to the draft report on the consultations.

Minutes of the meeting are being prepared.

- K.H.



### International Roundtable

On the occasion of the official visit to Canada of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Poul Hartling, the Canadian Foundation for Refugees and the UNHCR hosted an international round table discussion on the subject of integration of refugees. Ten delegates from across Canada and delegates representing Denmark, France, Greece, Hong Kong, Norway, Spain, Sudan, the U.K., and the U.S. shared their experiences regarding initial reception, language acquisition, and cultural and emotional problems of refugees.

The European and North American countries all shared several of the same concerns:

- selection priorities that ensure less fortunate and less resourceful refugees access to resettlement
- settlement of refugees in sufficiently large communities of their own ethnic groups that they can retain their cultures and be involved in refugee policy and decision-making
- an international clearing house for information
- language training and orientation programmes for refugees in countries of first asylum in preparation for resettlement
- family reunification, family stress, and lack of guidance for young people separated from their families.

These concerns were, however, in sharp contrast to those of Sudan and Hong Kong, which in addition to being countries of resettlement are also countries of first asylum. The delegate from Sudan, where refugees walk across the border and go to friends or relations, did not think of integration in terms of permanent settlement, but of long-term but temporary asylum. The delegate from Hong Kong, which with its 5½ million people had given 14,300 Southeast Asian refugees permanent resettlement and still harbours 15,000 awaiting durable solutions, emphasized that problems of integration were not urgent compared to the need to find places for resettlement.

- K.H.

# TRACING RELATIVES OF SOUTHEAST ASIANS

## COMPUTER NETWORK IN CALGARY

by Bill Laberis, *Computerworld*

Joe Caruana of Calgary has established a tracing system for family reunification using a network of volunteer computer operators. Caruana's service deals only with Vietnamese and has records back only as far as 1975.

An international microcomputer network is helping unite the thousands of former "Boat People" who were separated from family members while fleeing Vietnam . . . and scattered throughout the world.

Using 2,100 microcomputers in 23 countries, Family Reunification Services (FRS) has located 900 missing family members since its founding just six months ago.

\* \* \*

Vietnamese who know about FRS initiate the reuniting process by filling out a personal data questionnaire available through refugee resettlement groups around the world . . . Someone, say a Vietnamese man living in New York and looking for his wife, fills out the 25-question form, describing his wife by marriage and all family names, ages, places of birth, place last seen, and so on. He also fills out a data profile of himself, a file of which is sent to FRS headquarters in Calgary.

A tape of his wife's profile is then sent from one microcomputer operator to another until it has reached the 2,100 operators in 23 countries. Each operator codes the data to be programmed into his own system.

If the missing wife should herself fill out a questionnaire in any one of the countries where the FRS operates, a microcomputer there will match her profile with the file of her made out by her husband and entered at an earlier date. The computer registers a "find".

The good news is relayed back to Calgary where FRS then begins the arduous task of physically reuniting the family, working within statutory limitations of international immigration laws.

\* \* \*



Despite its early successes, the project has not been without its problems, many of which develop in the questionnaire phase of the process.

For one thing, a 20-year-old American would be listed as 21 years of age by the Vietnamese, who consider a newborn to be one year old.

And some Vietnamese women retain their birth names, while others write their first name last and their last name first, sometimes including their mother's maiden name and sometimes not.

And once FRS came within hours of sending an anxious wife in France winging to the waiting arms of a husband in New York - but not her husband.

### Rewarding Moments

"We've had our share of rewarding moments, too," Caruana said. "Recently we had a pretty definite match between a woman in Saskatchewan and her four-year-old son in Wellington, New Zealand, but we weren't absolutely sure."

FRS sent a photo of the woman to Wellington. The child took one look at it, then burst into tears, crying for his mother. The two were reunited, and the woman, who speaks no English, has phoned Caruana several times since then, saying "Cam onh" over and over again - Vietnamese for "Thank you".

*This article was abridged from an article that was originally published in Computerworld, Vol. XV, No. 5, February 2, 1981 (Framingham, Massachusetts: CW Communications, Inc.).*

*For more information contact Family Reunification Services, 7203 Huntercrest Rd., N.W., Calgary, Alta., T2K 4J9.*

## THE RED CROSS

by Patricia McCarthy, Tracing & Reunion Section

Each month the Canadian Red Cross Society receives around 500 requests for Southeast Asian Tracing and Family Reunion. Sponsoring groups, individuals, and refugee organizations should direct their inquiries to their local Red Cross branch (*not* the National Office). Only the local Red Cross branch is in a position to obtain and clarify all information necessary. The enquirer will complete a form giving the following information about the person being sought:

- full name
- date of birth
- place of birth
- names, dates and places of birth of any children
- last known address of the person sought and its date
- relationship of the enquirer to the person sought
- the reason for the search, and details of the circumstances surrounding the request for the search
- father's name
- mother's name
- spouse's name

Because of the large number of requests we receive, we must give priority to enquiries for close family members, i.e. husband, wife, children, mother, father, brother, sister. *It is not possible for us at present to search for friends or acquaintances.* A search usually takes months to complete, as every Red Cross Society shares our problem of overwhelming numbers of enquiries.

Kampuchean refugee child at the Sakaeo Camp Tracing Office. Photo: UNHCR

Continued from page 2.

fertile country, and with luck it will soon become self-sufficient in food. The difficulty is getting over the next hurdle - restoring the society culturally and psychologically, and helping Kampuchians to stand on their own feet and again be able to produce the material things they need. This is made very difficult by the United States forbidding their non-governmental agencies to send anything but straight emergency aid and trying to influence the international agencies to do the same.

### Return from Thailand

In the refugee camps in Thailand, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Red Cross are trying very hard to get the Khmer people to return to their own country. Many of them are young men who are badly needed at home. Any who return receive goods and help to resettle in their former homes or wherever they wish.

One of the great difficulties is that Pol Pot still maintains an army on the border of Thailand and Kampuchea and is constantly attacking the people within Kampuchea. The Vietnamese army tries to control this but Pol Pot's army, the Khmer Rouge, retreat into the refugee camps in Thailand, rest and eat food contributed by the international agencies, are re-armed by China and return to kill and pillage. The refugee camps are all controlled by the Thai army and when the international agencies try not to feed the soldiers, the Thai army interferes.

At least 30,000 Khmers had agreed to go home, and a flight to Phnom Penh had been arranged as it is too dangerous to cross the border by land because of the many armed groups. However, the Thais refused to allow the flight as they felt it would imply recognition of the Vietnamese-supported Phnom Penh government. The UNHCR and the Red Cross have been looking into the feasibility of transferring the refugees to a third country, possibly Burma, and flying them home from there. But just before I left Thailand, the United States, after taking very few Khmers to date, suddenly started to take about a thousand a month. This destabilized all the camps - no one wants to go back to a poor, struggling country when they can come to the land of their dreams, the promised land, America.

### Canada must help

I came back from Southeast Asia very concerned, for it is a danger point where the United States, the Soviet Union and China are using other countries for their own purposes, and there is a great danger of a collision of those interests which could involve all of us.

With great generosity Canadians have welcomed thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia, and for those individuals who were helped it has been a wonderful thing. But for the overall problem in that part of the world it has only been a band-aid treatment. What is needed is an end to sending arms to the region, and massive development aid so the countries can live in peace and feed their own people.

Canada as a country could follow the example of her generous citizens and give the kind of aid these countries need to care for their people at home.

As Pierre Trudeau said in Parliament June 15, Canada has an obligation to help people from the Third World who are suffering the ravages of hunger and war. "If we say no, then they are doomed and so are we." □

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